

[Interview with Vito Cacciola #5]

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1938-9 Paper No. V . INTERVIEW WITH VITO CACCIOLA

by Merton Lovett

As well as remembered

A Legend

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Page 1 INTERVIEW WITH VITO CACCIOLA

by Merton R. Lovett A Legend

“Back of our town in Sicily was a higha mountain. Everybody call-ed it the Castle. It risa up steep lika dat. On de mountain sides was stone walls. De Saracens builda de walls long, long ago. High on de mountain, meara de top, was a cavern. Everybody, say dat in de cavern was mucha money. Sometime de boys, dey climba de mountain. Dey passa de little gardens and de pasture, where de girls watcha de goats and de sheep. Dey crawla over de rocks and de walls till dey see de black hole whats de door to de cavern. When I geta so near I shiver and shaka. I am afraid, cause de money guard-ed by a spirit. Then we runa and falla douna de mountain. Sometime I looka back but never I see de ghosta.

“My grandfader he tella me de story of de cave. He say dat long, long ago when de Saracans rula de island, a gangster, yes liaka de pirate, keepa de money he steal in dat cave. A bigga Saracan chop a him with de sword and try steala de money. But it is

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enchanted. What you calla a ghost frighten de Saracan away. All de time de ghost 2 watch de money. He killa everybody what tries to go in de cave.

“My grandfader tella me dat his great grandfader wanted to getta dis money and maka himself a rich man. But he was wise my greata greata grandpapa. He think and thinka how he could foola de spirit. Den one day he climba de mountain. He taka wid him his biga dog. Dis dog was smarta too. He do everything my great, great, grandfader tella him. De old man also taka one very tall candle.

“When de little moon setta behind de mountain, de old man and de dog coma to de open door in de rocks. He crossa himself and say a prayer and lighta de candle. Den he come in de hole and de dog wid him. In little way, he looka down and see on de cavern floor three bigga piles of money. One pile was gold and shina like de hotta coals in de fire. Anudder pile was silver and shina like de sand in de moon. De uder pile dida not shine so much. De money was copper.

“My great greata grandfader, he was a mucha brave man. He swinga de candle all around like dis. He 3 looka for de ghost. ‘Hah! Hah!’ he say, ‘de ghost he gone for sleepa or walka.’

“Den he turna de candle down-sida up. De grease he dripa down on de pile of gold money. It splasha, splasha on de pretty dollars. It maka de gold whita like milk.

“Now de old man do what he schema all de time to do. He calla de dog and say, ‘Are you hungry dog? You jumpa down in de cave and eata dat candle.’

“Dat's right, Mr. Lovett, it was de candle grease, de tallow, and my greata, great grandfader knowed dat de grease sticka to de gold dollars like glue to his rubber heel. De old man so smarta, he know de dog, who eata fast lika pig, will swallow de same time gold and de tallow. Den de old man schema to cutta de dog's belly or maybe waita till de gold passa out.

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"Sure, de dog was always obey. He jumpa down on de gold. He eata de tallow fast like a wolfa. He eata some of de gold too.

"Bye and Bye my greata de great grandpapa calla de dog. He say, 'Coma out! Coma out! You de 4 besta and richest dog in Sicily. Coma out dog and I giva you home some meata. Hah! Hah! we foola good de ghost.'

"No. What you think Mr. Lovett? De ghost he just sleepa. Perhaps he hida and look all de time. Now he say in de voice lika de fire mountain, yes, de volcano, 'Stoppa where you are, dog! You tinka you steala my money. I showa you! Stay where you is, dog. You no can leava my cave till you (expurgated) pass out all de gold you eata.'

"My great greata grandfader he see and heara de spirit. He's frighten; mucha frighten. He calla again to his dog. But de dog he no mova. He looka sad at de ole man and de water dropa from his eyes. But he no can move. He is quiet lika rock.

"Den de ghost, big like a tree, mova near de old man. And de old man runa. He much brave, but whata you do? He runa and runa down to his house.

"De dog? Believe not you me de day after de next day he coma home. He crya and howl. He's look lika he been sick. De old man watcha him long time but he getta no gold.

"By jingo. No more man ever see dat money. No one's a brava enough to go in dat cave."